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SIXTH SERIES.

SALMON FOR FOOD AND SALMON FOR SPORT.

By AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE, Author of *Highland Sport*.

FOR the last ten years the supply of Scotch salmon has been steadily decreasing. What are the causes of this decay? What remedies are wanted not only to arrest it but to turn the falling off into a yearly increasing yield? The causes are quite clear: they are over-netting by too numerous bag-nets, the non-observance of the weekly close-time by very many of them, the poaching of scringers and steam-trawlers, badly-marked estuary lines, and absurdly-dated yearly close-times. These are the main points to be dealt with; but undoubtedly the large increase in the number of bag-nets is the prime cause of the decay.

Before going further, it may be well to define the difference between a 'bag' and a 'stake' or 'fly' net. In each the principle is the same: a net stretched taut from the shore, against which coasting fish will strike; and, in following it up to pass round it, they are guided into a box-shaped bag at the end, out of which they seldom find their way, although the opening by which they went in is, of course, always available. The stake or fly net is used in shallow water, and fixed to stakes driven into the ground; the bag-nets are used for deeper water, and are floating nets fixed to buoys moored to anchors. In some places they are used singly, in others they are put out one beyond the other seaward from the shore.

During the last thirty years the numbers of these nets—or 'fixed engines,' as they are also called—have been doubled, until now there are close on two thousand of them working on the whole of the Scotch coasts, of which about three-quarters are on the east and north coasts. They are by no means evenly distributed, as in certain parts long distances are to be met with in which there are no nets; but wherever experience has shown that salmon may be captured, there are the nets clustered together as thick as they well can be. In the hundred miles of coast between

Fife Ness and Peterhead there are fully nine hundred bag-nets at work, or one in less than every two hundred yards. Here, with a vengeance, is an example of the abuse of netting rights crying loudly for legal interference; and if that does not come shortly the jealousies of the rival tacksmen netting against each other will lead to a still further increase in even this enormous number. Nets which are worked between the mouths of two rivers running into the sea near to each other should be entirely done away with—as, for instance, those working on the three to four miles of sandy shore lying between the mouths of the Dee and the Don; for there can be no doubt that the presence of an unlimited number of bag-nets between the mouths of these two rivers is most unfair to the chartered rights of the river-owners.

On all the remote and inaccessible parts of the coasts the bulk of the bag-nets do not observe the weekly close-time; and, though the fact is well known to the Fishery Board, prosecutions are few and far between. 'Surprise' visits are occasionally made; but the carrying of them out is too often entrusted to the relations or friends of the men to be surprised, so a hint reaches the netters before the visit takes place, and of course everything is found in order. Give me a smooth sea and (so that the netters' plea of 'rough weather' may not be available) a fast steam-launch, and, starting at six o'clock on Saturday evening from a small port that shall be nameless, by six o'clock on the Monday morning following I would undertake to have detected from forty to a hundred bag-nets all fishing through the weekly close-time!

The Fishery Board Report of 1884 says on this subject: 'With regard to the non-observance of the weekly close-time by the bag-nets it ought to be stated that it is in some measure owing to the system by which the men who work the nets are paid. These men, besides their regular wages, are paid to a certain extent by results, and the more fish they catch the more money they receive. The natural and inevitable consequence of this

system is to induce and encourage breaches of the weekly close-time wherever any pretence for its non-observance can be founded on stress of weather, or where the district where the bag-nets are worked is so remote as to be seldom visited by the river watchers.' Though this report was issued fifteen years ago, the lawlessness has increased instead of decreased. One more case of illegal fishing can be mentioned that may serve as a warning to anglers. Some few years ago I stayed at a Highland hotel with a salmon river attached to it, let by the day, week, or month at a pretty stiff rate. For four days I fished it for one fish, in the meanwhile hardly seeing another. So, as the water and the time of year were both right, I gave up, as it happened, on a Saturday evening; and, not being able to depart on Sunday, I took a stroll of some six miles to the nearest bag-net station. The sea was like a mirror, but the whole of the nets—eight of them in all—were fishing just as if no such thing as a close-time existed. Returning to the hotel, I sent for the landlord and told him of the discovery, and put it to him that he was not acting fairly in advertising his river and inducing anglers to come and spend their money with him while he was probably well aware that the bag-nets habitually disregarded the weekly close-time, and were thus each week robbing his river of a certain number of fish. He admitted the justice of the complaint, but excused himself by saying I was the first gentleman who had found it out, and that he 'dared not interfere.' That river still continues to be advertised; and, as it once had a reputation, fresh anglers go to it each year, while the nets still continue to fish the whole of the weekly close-time!

I could multiply instances without end of this habitual law-breaking and disregard of the weekly close-time; and there are but few tacksmen who have not been fined for the offence. Many of them complain that it is hard to make them responsible for the acts of their servants, whose unlawful operations have been carried out in defiance of the strictest orders to the contrary. They claim, in fact, an exemption from the law of *Qui facit per alium facit per se*, which governs all relations between master and man throughout the kingdom. What would the tacksmen say if the servants of the railway company that carried their fish-boxes to Billingsgate stole their salmon *en route*? Would they be content if the railway company answered their just complaints by stating that such act of their servants was strictly against orders, and that, therefore, it was hard to hold them responsible? The two cases are on all-fours, and it is surprising that such a plea should have been seriously put forward.

To obtain convictions requires an altogether different method of going to work than is at present in use. The local water-bailiffs are nearly always friends or relations of the men they are

employed to watch; blood is thicker than water, and hence the rarity of prosecutions. I know of one case where two English bailiffs were put on a Scotch district; they were fearless men, strangers to all around, did their duty boldly, undeterred by threats; and in two seasons they effectually extinguished close-time fishing, as well as a good deal of poaching.

Personally I have always considered it would prevent all this illegal work if the owners of the netting-rights worked them for their own profit, instead of letting them for small rents, to be worked by outsiders, who make very large profits, amounting to sums which most proprietors would be glad to have in their own pockets. If they owned land farms that would pay them from sixty to a hundred per cent. profit on their outlay for working them, it is quite certain they would not let them for less than they were worth; but they seem to think water farms are too troublesome to manage, though they will undoubtedly yield the large profits I have named; and thus there are very few owners who work their own nets or realise what they lose by letting them. If owners netted for themselves the fact would be a guarantee that it would be done fairly—for owners are mostly gentlemen, and gentlemen are not poachers.

I will take now some nettings I know of on about twenty miles of coast, on which there are fish to be netted from the 11th of February, the opening day of the season. On this stretch of shore there are just fifty bag-nets—not evenly distributed, but bunched together thickly on the best fishing-grounds. These fifty nets are leased to a tacksman for £250 a year. Let us look at his other expenses, and try to make an approximate estimate of his profit or loss.

Each bag-net will cost him about £20. Every seven, often every five, of them will require a visiting boat costing £17. Each boat will want a crew of five men at £1, 2s. a week—the lowest estimate of wages; there will be ice to purchase, carriage to pay, fish-boxes to buy, and repairs of plant. Here we have as capital:

Fifty nets at £20.....	£1000	0	0
Seven boats at £17.....	119	0	0
Purchase of fish-boxes, anchors, &c.....	131	0	0
	£1250	0	0

This is for a plant specially liable to be damaged and to wear out quickly; probably every three years it would require nearly entire renewing, so let us add £400 a year and call the capital £1650.

Next there are the working expenses. Probably the whole of the fifty nets would not be fished from the 11th of February. Say that but twenty-one nets are worked for the first eight weeks of the season, requiring three boats of five men each at £1, 2s. a week, or £132. At the end of the eight weeks the whole fifty nets would be put on for the remaining twenty weeks of the season, entailing

a further expenditure of £770, or a total of £902 for wages. To this add the cost of ice, railway freight, &c.—say £98; to which must be added £250 for rental.

So here is a capital of £1650 requiring an outlay of £1250 to work it. How is the tacksman to recover his outlay and make a profit?

Let us suppose that each net catches a fish a day during the season. Then, the twenty-one nets fishing for the first eight weeks will take 1008 fish; for the next twenty weeks the whole fifty will get 6000 more, or a total of 7008 fish, of an average weight of 10 lb.—equal to 70,080 lb., which will be sold at an average of 1s. 2d. per lb., and so realise £4088. Thus the tacksman will have paid all his expenses, recovered his outlay, have £400 in hand against depreciation of plant, and yet have a clear profit of £1188!

I have the best of reasons for saying this estimate is not very far out for the cost of working any fifty nets between Berwick-on-Tweed and Duncansby Head. If the cost of the plant has been slightly underestimated, the capture of fish per net per week has certainly been taken at less than it really is; at any rate, if I am anywhere nearly correct, here is a nice profit that owners might just as well put in their own pockets instead of handing it over to a tacksman.

To turn now to *messieurs les assassins*; the space at my disposal compels me to dismiss all the race of river gentry, from the shepherd who takes a single fish for his family dinner to the large and lawless gangs of night-poachers. The river-sneaks, however undesirable they may be, cannot, however, do one-hundredth part of the harm that is wrought by a crew of scringers, or a steam-trawler, or the poaching captain of a yacht. We will take the scringers first. Their homes and their hunting grounds are almost entirely on the west coast, the great numbers of burns and rivers running into the sea offering them opportunities which are lacking in the estuaries of the larger rivers and less indented coasts of the east of Scotland. Oban is notoriously the headquarters of the fraternity. From that town alone there are fully six boats of six men to each living entirely by poaching; to the north and south there are other minor resorts; and between these gangs the sea-trout are already nearly exterminated, while in due course the salmon will follow. The poachers use a herring or mackerel net with a deep bag, at times fishing from the shore in the usual method, at others fishing in deep waters, having the net between two boats, which make a wide sweep and then come together. They are a lawless, reckless lot, prepared to offer violence to any one, and keeping the lessees of the bag-net fishings at bay by threats of cutting their nets adrift if they interfere; and the evil has now got to such a pitch that only vigorous action and severer penalties can stamp it out. At Oban they openly land their fish and sell

it under price; and this continues for fully a month after the commencement of the annual close-time on the 26th of August.

There is not a single proprietor on the west coast who does not complain of this abominable poaching. Government interference seems to be hopeless, and no Scotch member of Parliament is apparently willing to take the matter up. The question then arises: Would it not well pay the whole of the west coast proprietors if they entered into a combination—say from the Inver River on the north to the Add on the south? On this stretch of coast there are fully a hundred rivers and burns that are being ruined, and quite fifty proprietors who are interested in them; if they would combine and subscribe, say, £25 each, there would be funds sufficient to hire for three months two fast steam-launches, provided with search-lights, and captained and manned properly. If two such boats were well handled they should not only make short work of the scringers, but would also be able to detect the greater part of the bag-nets fishing during the weekly close-time; while the proprietors would speedily recoup themselves by increased rents or increased sport. The steam-trawler poacher, I am glad to say, is already attracting the notice of Parliament. Why? Because the scringers themselves complain of their depredations to the gentlemen who represent them there!

There is another class of scringer meriting the most severe punishment—namely, the poaching skipper of a hired yacht. Every season large sums are made—as much as £300 one skipper owned to—by keeping the poached fish on ice and sending them to market as opportunity offers; and a yacht on a west coast trip presents this every two or three days.

The estuaries of most rivers have been made too small, and fixed entirely in favour of the nets, and never in the interests of the salmon or the rivers. Most of the estuary limits would be better for revision. The description of many of them is also very difficult to understand; here, for instance, is a common form of delineation. The estuary of the Findhorn reads as follows—and what could be more vague or more puzzling even to the oldest fisherman on the spot?—‘A line drawn due north from the outermost of the two shipping piers of the town of Findhorn as extends from high-water mark outwards to two hundred yards below low-water of equinoctial spring-tides; on the west a line parallel with and one and a half miles distant from the foregoing described line, and also extending outwards from high-water mark to two hundred yards below low-water of equinoctial spring-tides; and on the north a line of two hundred yards out from low-water of equinoctial spring-tides, and connecting the outer ends of the two lines hereinbefore described.’

It is equally hard to understand the close-times

fixed for some rivers. Take the Hope, for instance, which opens for the rod on the 11th of January, but in which no clean fish has ever been caught or even seen until the middle of June! There are also plenty of rivers which open on the 11th of February, and yet contain no clean fish till two or three months later. Why, then, should they be 'opened' by law so long before they are 'opened' by nature? Again, the Helmsdale opens for the rod on the 11th of January, but the Brora, only a few miles distant, cannot be fished till the 11th of February; and yet on the 11th of January there are probably more fresh-run fish in the latter river than in the former. It is discrepancies like these, which could be multiplied indefinitely, that show in what a slipshod and happy-go-lucky way our salmon-fishery laws have been framed.

Members of Parliament talk grandly about salmon as a 'food-supply.' What nonsense that is! A food supply means something that the masses can live on and enjoy at a price they can afford to pay. In February this year salmon was 5s. 6d. per lb.; at the end of May it was 3s. 6d.; and it is never less in price per lb. than the finest Southdown mutton. Food-supply, forsooth! How many working-men are there who can afford to buy salmon at even 10d. per lb.? To be worthy of the name, salmon should be sold at 1s. per lb. in February, and 4d. per lb. in May. This could be done—easily done—by legislation and proper protection; and, in spite of the cheapness, the owners of the rivers and the tacksmen would both make heavier profits than they do at present. The angling values would increase enormously, while the tacksman might have to work harder for a shorter time, but it would pay him much better to catch 100,000 fish of 10 lb. each and sell them at 3d. per lb. than to catch 10,000 fish of the same weight and sell them at 1s. per lb. To arrive at a millennium of this sort every available means must be used; and this brings us to the matter of hatcheries, and the question as to whether they really help.

There is some difference of opinion on this point; and in several instances the small returns obtained have set both proprietors, tacksmen, and anglers against them. Where, however, the return of fry to the river nearly equals the number of eggs taken from the fish, then surely it must in the long-run far exceed the yield of nature. Floods, frosts, and droughts are powerless to destroy the ova in a hatchery, which is also protected from the ravages of birds and fishes. Moreover, if the burn into which the fry are eventually turned be previously dammed back until the bed is nearly dry, and all trout and eels removed; and if it be further protected by netting (wire or other) from the overhead attacks of gulls, &c., then it can safely be asserted

that the artificial method will be much more productive than the natural one. Of course there must come a period when the fry have to be turned into the river, and once there they will have to take their chance with the naturally-hatched fry; and I have met with those who maintain that the artificially-reared fry are not so sharp as the natural fry in protecting themselves from the attacks of gulls, &c., and that these latter fry will instantly seek shelter under stones at the sight of a hovering gull, while the former do not recognise the enemy until too late.

Many hatcheries are kept up by private enterprise, as those of Lord Abinger, on the Spean; the Marquis of Ailsa's, at Culzean; the Marquis of Breadalbane's, at Taymouth; Lord Burton's, at Glen Quoich; Sir John Fowler's, at Braemore; Mr Pilkington's, at Sandside; the Duke of Richmond's, at Fochabers, from which 840,000 fry were turned into the Spey in 1898; and the Duke of Sutherland's, at Torrish, on the Helmsdale, which I had the advantage of seeing under the guidance of Mr Macfarlan and his keeper, Mackay, who superintends it. Other hatcheries are at Alness, Brora, Loch Buie, Conon Bridge, Dupplin, Durris, Howietoun, Stormontfield, Tongueland (on the Kirkcudbright Dee), and last, but not least, that of Mr Armistead, on the Solway. Some of these belong to the district fishery boards, as those of Dupplin and Durris; others, like those of Howietoun and Mr Armistead's, breed to sell. In the few places in which hatcheries have been abandoned, bad management has been the cause; but, as a rule, when once started they have been kept up on account of the benefits that were derived.

The following rivers have no hatcheries: Annan, Awe, Ayr, Cassley, Carron, Cree, Deveron, North Esk, South Esk, Findhorn, Forth, Ness, Nairn, Oykel, Shin; also, nearly all the small rivers of the west coast are in the same plight. Now, if there is any good at all in hatcheries, each river should certainly have one, if not two, attached to it, each capable of hatching out 500,000 ova; and the district boards should have power to order their erection and be able to provide for their cost and maintenance by a *pro rata* tax on every one deriving profit or pleasure from the river or its coast fishings. Of course, hatcheries of themselves will not do everything that is necessary to restore and improve to the utmost our salmon-fisheries, yet they will go a long way if backed up by better protection against poaching, by the prevention of netting during the weekly close-time, and by judicious alterations in some of the annual close-times and estuary lines. In my humble opinion, it is only parliamentary interference that will do these things, and effectually bring salmon-eating and salmon-catching within the reach of the multitude.

THE BEGGAR OF THE BLUE PAGODA.

By CARLTON DAWE.



It is often the unexpected that happens, so the unsuspected are invariably worthy of suspicion; and this unique theory was never better exemplified than in the case of Meng-Hi, or, as he was commonly called, the Beggar of the Blue Pagoda. This pagoda was an unpretentious one, which was fast falling to decay, and it stood on a little eminence to the north of the Great Wall. Once, no doubt, it was looked upon as the *fung-shui*, or good luck of the place; but of late it had lost its reputation, and the authorities had allowed it to fall into neglect. In its roofless upper stories the birds built their nests, while weeds and shrubs grew round and out of its dilapidated windows. It was said that these windows had once been painted blue, hence its name; but the woodwork was all weather-stained and rotten, and the whole structure presented a sad picture of dreariness and decay.

Many and many a time I had passed the pagoda, and always with a certain amount of interest; for rumour had been rife with its reputation, and it bore a name that was anything but honoured. Though the road that ran by it was much frequented through the day, at night the people gave it a wide berth. Most of them believed that it was haunted. Many had actually seen the presiding ghost, as it peered out at them from the ruined windows; others had heard cries as of men in agony. In fact, so vile had become the reputation of this particular pagoda that many of the people had petitioned the Government to have it demolished, a petition which was duly considered, and might have been acceded to had not the superstitious element been introduced into the controversy. If an evil spirit had taken up his abode in the pagoda, it were as well to leave him alone. There was no knowing what form his wrath might take if he were deprived of his habitation.

How I came to be associated with the Blue Pagoda, and of Meng the Beggar, I will set forth as succinctly as possible. Be it understood that I was a person of some official importance in Peking—what matters not; but, as I was seated in my office one day, a card was brought to me bearing the inscription of Tong-Che-Li. Tong was one of the most magnificent officials of the Tsung-li-Yamen, and as such I gave him an immediate audience. He entered, looking most dejected, and with a grave bow gave me salutation. I offered him a cigar, lighting one myself. He took it, but he did not light it. I saw that his long fingers were unconsciously squeezing it out of all recognisable shape.

'You will pardon the liberty I have taken in obtruding upon your illustrious privacy,' he began; 'but a matter of moment has forced me to dispense with the more honourable formalities. Behold a father plunged in grief for the loss of a beloved son—a son in whom was the light and the wisdom of the world. I know not what has befallen him; but I fear that he is gone, and that my name shall be known no more on earth.'

'Please tell me what has happened.'

'Sorry am I to say that my knowledge is meagre in the extreme. Three days ago he left his home. He has not returned.'

'You have traced him?'

'From house to house, through the city to the North Wall. He was last seen in the vicinity of the Blue Pagoda. For miles the surrounding country has been searched, but without the least success.'

'And you have come to me?'

'To bring the superiority of your honourable brains into action.'

I shrugged my shoulders.

'Name your own reward,' he continued eagerly.

'Though I am a poor man, I would willingly impoverish myself for him who is the flower of his race.'

'You are all alike,' I said. 'You wait until the scent is cold, or the enemy has a long start, and then you come asking me to catch him up. It is impossible. Am I a magician, that I should succeed where other men fail—men who are greater than I?'

'I would have come long since,' he answered frankly; 'but people said, "Who is this foreigner that you should go to him? His vanity is great; it will be greater if he thinks he is indispensable!" So I came not, much to my great sorrow. But all else having failed, I now come to you in my despair, and beg that you will use your illustrious intelligence in my unworthy cause.'

It seemed to me that there was little honour or profit to be got out of this quest; but, taking compassion on the father, I promised to do all that lay within my power, though I warned him of the folly of harbouring any too sanguine expectations. Then, when he was gone, I sat once more, lit a fresh cigar, and began to think. In ten minutes I had decided upon my plan of action. Looking at my watch, I found it was about an hour after midday. Time enough for *tiffin*. After the meal I dressed myself so as to look like a respectable business man, and stole quietly from the house, my objective being the Blue Pagoda. Here Lowan, the son of Tong-Che-Li, was last seen; and from here I intended to

begin my investigations. It was, as I have said, an expedition holding out little prospect of success; but I had promised to go on with it, and I had too much faith in my star to let an unpropitious outlook thwart me.

The Blue Pagoda stood on a slight eminence a little way back from the road, and was approached by a path which led to a considerable village on the other side of the hill. As I entered this path, my eyes fixed on the pagoda, a voice imploring alms fell on my ear. Turning sharply to the right, I saw, seated on the ground by the wayside, one of the most extraordinary figures imaginable. Clothed in rags, and gaunt and dirty, the beggar had doubled himself up in a way that made him seem all arms and legs. He looked up at me with queer, twisted eyes; and then I saw that his face was ghastly with hunger or pain. In one hand he held a crutch, in the other a little tin receptacle for *cash*. Seeing me stand to watch him, he began to whine and supplicate in the most approved fashion, and with the aid of his crutch painfully dragged himself to his feet. If, sitting, he was a pitiable object, standing up he was infinitely worse. His legs seemed to overlap each other in some extraordinary fashion, and had it not been for the support of his crutch they would probably have collapsed altogether.

So this was Meng, the notorious Beggar of the Blue Pagoda. Some said he was rich, though it was difficult to associate riches with such filth and rags; that he was most cruelly afflicted was patent to the least observant. Yet the air was rife with many strange stories of him—stories which did not always redound to his credit. Thus it was said that, while he cringed to the dauntless, he almost demanded alms of the timid, a malicious glance of his twisted eyes being quite enough to extract a small donation. Nervous people, if alone, did their best to elude him in their comings and goings. To pass him without a bribe was an ordeal which few of them had the courage to undergo. Every child who came within reach of his crutch felt the weight of it.

To his earnest solicitations I gave him a few *cash*, and tried my best to enter into a conversation with him; but to all my questions he replied with the one whine, 'Alms, master; alms for the poor cripple.' For a few more *cash* he overwhelmed me with objectionable blessings; but it was not to be blessed by him that I had come. I thought that I could not apply to one more likely to give me the information required. Lowan had last been seen near the Blue Pagoda. The Beggar might remember him, might even recollect if he had been alone or not. It was a very slender chance, but I had learned not to slight the meanest opportunity. Yet when I looked at him I paused as if by intuition; looking close, I found him less satisfactory. Truly his eyes were hideous in their deformity, but I was not sure that I had not seen people twist their eyes in a somewhat

similar manner. Moreover, twisted as they were, it was absolutely impossible for him to see. Yet I had never heard that he was blind. So I began to think, and thought bred considerable doubt. It is probable that never before had Meng been subjected to so close a scrutiny.

'You seem in a pitiable condition,' I said. 'How came your honourable eyes to possess such an extraordinary twist?'

'The gods frowned at my birth,' he answered, turning his face up to me.

I did not wonder at nervous people fleeing from him. He was painfully, frightfully hideous.

Then he began once more the old whine, 'Alms, master; alms for the poor cripple.'

'Why don't you say poor blind cripple?'

'Because Heaven has still left me some consolation. I am not blind.'

'But I say you are. I am a doctor, and I say that it is impossible for you to see with your eyes twisted in this fashion. Liar, thief, cheat! You are not blind, you rogue. Look at me;' and I gripped him by the shoulder with a suddenness which completely threw him off his guard. As if to confirm my suspicion, his eyes opened naturally and he glared furiously at me. I flung him aside, forgetting for the moment his crippled state, and he fell with a whining cry like that of a feeble old man. But I was too angry with him to feel any remorse, so I marched off promising him a visit from the law, while he continued feebly to jabber curses.

However, heeding him not, I passed the pagoda and made my way across the hill to the village of which I have already spoken. Here I spent some time in making inquiries; but of Lowan I secured not one scrap of valuable information, though the people had many strange tales to tell of the Beggar with the twisted eyes.

It was almost dark when I set out from the village; and as I approached the pagoda I saw the fluttering figure of Meng-Hi blocking the path before me. Doubting not that I was seen, I felt at once for my revolver. But a few paces farther on I instinctively came to a halt, for I saw that the man's back was to me. In my soft shoes I had approached so noiselessly that he was unaware of my presence. Hesitating not a moment, I crouched in the grass by the wayside, and almost immediately after the Beggar disappeared in the shadow of the pagoda. Wondering what this could mean, I knelt for some little time, a prey to not a few very curious sensations. But presently I perceived the glimmering of a lantern far down the path, which proclaimed the coming of travellers. Immediately I retreated some paces farther back into the grass.

Certainly I did not know what to expect; but kneeling there, waiting for something to happen, had a most singular effect upon my nerves. I gazed at the pagoda towering ghost-like in the gloom, and something of the awe of the place

made itself felt. I did not wonder at the superstitious folk peopling that strange edifice with evil spirits. But presently, where the path widened by the foot of the pagoda, I beheld the lantern come quivering towards me, though it was too dark to see who carried it. Indeed, strain my ears as I would, I caught no patter of feet; but just then a groan, followed by a piercing shriek, came from the region of the pagoda and wailed away in the darkness. It was a ghostly sound—awesome enough to make a strong-nerved person shudder. Therefore its influence upon the superstitious travellers was no cause for surprise. He who bore the lantern dropped it with a terrified shriek and sprang forward; those who accompanied him also screamed with terror; and presently some half-dozen forms flitted by me, rushing as if for dear life. There would be some strange tales told in the village that night, and many men and women would creep tremblingly to bed.

I sat upon the grass and thought; and thought gave birth to some strange sensations. Fancy assumed the cloak of reality, and Meng, the ghost, and the mystery of the pagoda, became living entities. I was now quite willing to believe most of the tales told of the doings of the supernatural inhabitant. Indeed, had I not heard the shriek and the groan with my own ears?—a pair of witnesses in whom I had implicit confidence. It was no sighing of the wind or screaming of a wandering night-bird, but a ghostly shriek, calculated to make the soul jump from a superstitious body. About it being the cry of a disembodied spirit I had some doubt. Then, what was it? One answer only was obvious. It must be the work of the Beggar, Meng. Hiding behind the pagoda, he had played off his practical joke on the ignorant travellers, who, believing that the place was haunted, wanted but little convincing. I could imagine the ugly wretch revelling in the terror he had awakened; for a fellow with a twisted body could hardly escape a twisted soul. And yet the shriek had come from far up the pagoda; of that I had no doubt whatever. Certainly it is extremely difficult to locate sound; but nevertheless it can be located, and I would venture my oath upon the accuracy of my judgment. Then it was equally obvious that if the sound came from high up the pagoda, somebody must be there to produce it. Was it the Beggar, Meng-Hi?

At any rate, the matter was worth investigating, and I accordingly resolved to investigate it. I therefore began a stealthy advance through the grass on my hands and knees, my ears alert for any suspicious sound, my eyes glued to the windows of the pagoda. But I neither saw nor heard anything calculated to throw light upon my doubts, and I reached the base of the edifice without mishap. Fortunately for me the night was dark, so that once I crept into the shadow

of the projecting base of the lower story I was enabled to stand upright. Instinctively I made for the side where I had seen the Beggar disappear; but in the darkness I could scarcely distinguish one stone from another. However, I quietly made the circuit of the structure, blaming myself all the time for not examining it more closely when I had daylight and the opportunity.

When I say that I had completed the circuit, I mean that I was under the impression I had returned to my starting-place, but that was evidently not so; for, still moving forward, and groping with my hands as before, my fingers suddenly encountered the end of a rope. Startled at the sudden impact, I at once let go, at first scarcely realising what it was I had touched. But a moment's reflection reassured me. I put up my hand again; the thing was still there. A rope undoubtedly, which my fingers instantly encircled. Fancy now assumed a more definite shape; and, as I carefully tested the rope, I found that it was strong enough to bear my weight. Again I thought of the Beggar, though it was impossible to connect him with any acrobatic feat. Yet there was evidently somebody in the pagoda, the entrance to which had been attained by means of this rope. But I could not comprehend the utter carelessness of leaving the rope dangling; unless, in the man's anxiety to reach the upper part of the building before the travellers passed, the thing had been forgotten.

For a time I remained undecided what to do. Reason bade me wait and seize the culprit as he came forth; but rashness, a thing I loathe because it masters me so often, advocated no less daring an enterprise than that of mounting by the rope and exploring the pagoda. But this suggestion was coldly received. I was not going to walk into the lion's den when, by waiting, the lion would most probably walk into my trap. Therefore I clutched the rope and waited—and waited.

I don't know how long I stood there straining intently for every sound. Not many minutes, perhaps; but in my impatience it seemed like an eternity. Then a thought assailed me which made me still more impatient. What if the rascal had gone to roost? I must confess this annoyed me consumedly. I might have to watch through the whole night. True, said reason, but you will catch him in the morning. Yes, indeed; but the morning was a long way off. Moreover, he might draw up his rope and decide to take up his quarters in the pagoda for a month. Then I should be perfectly helpless, as the authorities had too much respect for sacred things to admit of a desecration of the edifice. But when I called in reason to my aid I knew that rashness would gain the day. It was but a petty subterfuge of mine, a sort of conscience-easer. Instinctively my hands gripped the rope

tightly, and my feet began to grope along the masonry for a hold.

This first story, which might be called the foundation of the pagoda, was some twelve or fifteen feet high; and by the time I reached the top I felt that I had gone twice that distance. However, I dragged myself on to the platform, and there rested for a moment to regain my breath. Then, following the line of the rope, I found that it was hooked to a broken stanchion which had been one of the supports of the little balcony that had once run round the edifice, dilapidated fragments of which still remained. It required but little skill for a person standing on the ground to fling the hook round the stanchion. After I had fully regained my breath I crawled carefully to the nearest window, and, parting the weeds which flourished on the sill and in the corners, looked in. Nothing but darkness met my eyes, stillness my ears. I waited patiently, scarcely daring to breathe, yet nevertheless cogitating deeply within myself. The fact is, I was in an extremely awkward predicament. The darkness was so intense that I could not see to move, while to strike a light would have rendered me a rather conspicuous mark. Therefore I hung pendulous, as it were, in the grip of hesitancy, my ingenuity entirely at fault. I leant through the window as far as I could, and felt carefully so as not to dislodge any loose stones or plaster. Still, it must be remembered that I was groping blindly, and the result was that two or three pellets went clattering to the bottom; but, as they made only a slight noise, I was in hopes that little attention would be paid to the occurrence. Nevertheless I drew back and listened and waited.

Five, ten minutes I knelt thus, but no sound came to warn me of any watchfulness within. Then, once more, I gradually protruded my head into the aperture, and was about to light a bit of candle which I found in one of my pockets, when suddenly something whizzed past my ear and caught me a fearful blow on the left shoulder. Though for the moment it paralysed that side, I instinctively shot up my right hand, which immediately came in contact with a man's clothes. With a howl, the fellow struck another blow at me; but here at last the darkness stood my friend, and I escaped any grievous injury.

The momentary paralysis passing away, I seized my assailant with both hands, and immediately he flung himself upon me with the fury of a fiend. Of course, not seeing my danger, I could not tell exactly what he aimed for; but presently I felt myself lurch forward, and the next moment he and I went flying down into the inner darkness of the pagoda. Fortunately the fall was broken by something in the form of a roof or awning, which gave way beneath our weight; otherwise there is no knowing what would have happened, for we next struck the bottom with a force which shook the wind out of me, and

necessitated a loosening of our grip. Instinctively we both rolled away from each other.

Still as death I sat, holding my breath, listening intently, a revolver in my hand. But he gave no sound, and I tried to delude myself into the belief that he was knocked senseless; and yet I dared not put that belief to the test by lighting a match, for fear that he might shoot me, or spring upon me with his knife before I could defend myself. So for some minutes I sat quite still, until the darkness and the strain became intolerable; and during the whole of that time my mysterious assailant gave no sign of life. A dozen times I was tempted to strike a light; but some instinct which would not be gainsaid forbade the dangerous experiment. Still, I could no longer endure the terrible strain; so, as noiselessly as possible, I rose to my feet and carefully began to feel my way about, and the first thing my hand touched was a *human face*. I drew back with a shudder, while the owner of the face uttered a gasping shriek, which sounded singularly awesome in the uncanny darkness. After that we seemed instinctively to give each other more breathing space. Occasionally I heard him moving in the darkness; but for many minutes at a time no sound broke the awful stillness. I, backing a little, had come in contact with the wall, and there I meant to stay. It might be a long vigil, but daylight would come. With its first ray we should see who was to be master.

It now struck me as somewhat curious that he, who must have known so well every inch of the ground, had made no effort to escape in the darkness; and, the more I thought of this, the more valuable I believed my present position to be. Moreover, what meant the noise he was making over yonder if not to attract me thither? I believed, and not without reason, that I guarded the exit, and I pressed my back still more firmly against the wall, and vainly sought to penetrate the awful gloom. It may be difficult to convey the horror of such a situation; it certainly was one I have no wish a second time to experience. Indeed, it gradually grew so unbearable that I knew that it was exhausting my patience; and, had he not fortunately forestalled me in a forward movement, I might have been led to perpetrate some act of indiscretion.

I had remained so abnormally quiet, so immovable, that he could no longer endure the intolerable uncertainty. The warnings of his whereabouts had proved ineffective. I believed I guarded the exit, and no temptation would remove me from my post. But he, finding that the strain was no longer to be borne, and no doubt hoping that I had moved, began to creep forward, and I felt his outstretched fingers suddenly encircle my neck. It was a fearful shock; but, realising that the time had come, I instantly gripped him with my left hand, and with the other hurriedly raised the revolver. But before I

could fire, he, aiming at my head no doubt, lit me across the knuckles with a blunt instrument of some description, knocking the weapon from my hand. As it fell to the ground it exploded.

And now began a fierce struggle between me and my unknown assailant, he trying his hardest to choke me, I striving to return the compliment. He kicked, bit, scratched, fumed; he was like a hell-cat, a fiend let loose from the bottomless pit. A dozen times I thought I had him at my mercy, and as often he escaped me. I tried to throw him, but he was like a cat on his legs. His fury and his strength were equally remarkable, his attack being of the most venomous and savage nature. But at last I got a grip on him; and, forcing him back against the wall, I pressed my knee into his stomach, and presently he hung limp in my hands. I touched his head. It fell without resistance from side to side. The man was either dead or unconscious. Of that there could no longer be the slightest doubt.

Carefully laying him on the floor, and kneeling upon him for fear that he was shamming, I lit a match and held it low down, and I was not a little astonished to see the face of the Beggar, Meng; for, though I had believed him to be the culprit, his agility in the fight was not such as one would associate with a cripple. Indeed, the deformity of Mr Meng was but a clever assumption.

Well, I lit my candle and secured him, and I found that I was right in my conjecture respecting

the exit. Above me dangled a rope, by the aid of which Meng drew himself up and let himself down into the well of the pagoda, which he had transformed into a living apartment. It was the roof of this dwelling which had broken our fall.

Having no wish to spend the remainder of the night in such company, I once more examined my victim; and, finding that his breath came regularly, and that he was securely bound, I felt no scruple in leaving him. With the aid of the rope I easily swung myself up out of the dismal hole, and glad was I once more to feel the fresh air play about my heated face.

Little remains to be told. I hastened to the city, through the gates of which I had permission to pass at any hour; and, returning with my assistants, we soon had Mr Meng-Hi hoisted out of his retreat. An investigation of the pagoda resulted in our discovering, among many other things, the personal effects of the missing Lowan. Meng-Hi had murdered him, and his body, with the bodies of several others, was buried in the pagoda.

Not long after this the old edifice was struck by lightning and partly demolished, an incident which proved beyond doubt the anger Heaven entertained towards the accursed place. The authorities consequently had it razed to the ground. But the old people still pass the spot with a shudder, though the earth is no longer encumbered with the Beggar of the Blue Pagoda.

PICTORIAL POST-CARDS.

By NORMAN ALLISTON.



WHEN, some years ago, an astute photographer in Passau, Germany, chemically sensitised an ordinary postal card, and subsequently printed a view of his native town upon it, he little thought that he had thereby given birth to a craze absolutely unparalleled in the history of souvenir cards. The extraordinarily rapid development and wide diffusion of the craze is generally little known or imperfectly realised in this country. A few figures, gleaned from the report of the British Consul at Frankfort, should convince the sceptical that the pictorial post-card, having outlived the faddy stage and become a separate and distinct art, must be taken seriously.

A trade-paper estimates the number of workmen who find employment solely by the manufacture of illustrated post-cards at twelve thousand. It has been stated that at present about one hundred new post-cards are published daily in Germany. Calculating on the average of one thousand copies per design—a low estimate according to experts—this gives a daily total of one

hundred thousand cards, or six hundred thousand per week, which equals a yearly issue of over thirty million. As the German postal authorities report an increase of twelve million on the number of postal cards despatched yearly as compared with the number posted before the growth of the craze, it follows that Germany must export a large number of the same. This is indeed the case, for Germany exports more than half of the total number of cards that she makes, the principal recipients being South America, Australia, Austria, France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, and Sweden.

We would remind those who may fancy that the above estimate of an average issue of one thousand copies per design appears an excessive one, that during a single season one hundred and forty-eight thousand postal cards of the national Niederwald Monument of Germania were sent through the post. This beautifully situated memorial, erected to commemorate the success of the Fatherland in the Franco-German war, is annually visited by a large number of patriots and foreign tourists, which fact no doubt accounts for the extraordinary figures above. This, of

course, also applies to the Kyfhauser Monument, for which exactly the same numbers are given. The old tower of the castle at Heidelberg figured on no less than thirty-six thousand cards in one season. Again, more than one million illustrated pasteboards were despatched from an industrial exhibition which has lately concluded at Berlin; while at the Horticultural Exhibition at Hamburg the number mailed is officially given as five hundred and seventy-two thousand.

From the above it may be seen how acute Germany's cartomania is. If further proof were needed, one has only to peruse the numerous cartophilic press. There exist no fewer than from forty to fifty journals entirely devoted to cartography in this sense.* About one-half of these are published in Germany; while Austria, Italy, Hungary, France, Belgium, and Switzerland each possess one or several journals—mostly monthly ones. A large percentage of these are the official organs of souvenir post-card clubs; others are designed to cater for the unattached collector.

These few statistics should at least compel respect for the insidious souvenir post-card, which threatens to become a dangerous rival to the postage-stamp, so far as collecting is concerned. Indeed, it is almost bound to become more widely popular. It is complete in itself: on one card you have the foreign stamp and postmark, the greeting or notice of safe arrival of your friend, and, lastly, the presentment of his present surroundings—a picture of some far-off land, a lasting and pleasant souvenir. Thus the illustrated post-card admirably fulfils its mission in a handy form, conveying more than the verbose four-page letter in a fraction of its space. Add to this the fact that neat post-card albums are obtainable at very moderate prices, and it will be acknowledged that post-card collecting is at once an amusing and convenient hobby.

Some of the albums hold two, others four, cards on a page; but the method of inserting the post-card is common to all, the card being slipped under small slits in the paper in such a manner that it is held by the tips of its four corners, thus obviating the necessity of using adhesives. In this connection an example of our English conservatism and insularity may be noted—namely, that, among all the European countries, our post-cards alone differ in size and shape from those which are almost universally adopted. It follows that English souvenir cards are looked upon with disfavour among foreign collectors, because they do not fit into albums that hold post-cards of the more general size.

Concerning the illustrated cards themselves, it is most difficult to give any idea of the extreme

diversity of their style; but they may perhaps be divided into two classes—namely, photographic reproductions and others. At first the post-cards reproducing photographic views exhibited very crude workmanship, similar to the penny view-books sold in the London streets. A very different order of things now prevails, and the general excellence of the make-up of souvenir cards having been considerably perfected, several German firms are able to place upon the market, at the old prices, photographic post-cards which for finish and clearness of detail surpass the illustrations of our best monthly magazines. The same may be said of the lithographed reproductions of water-colour drawings, some of which are by noted artists. Topical post-cards are in great request—such, for instance, as the 'Dreyfus Affair' card, with a photo of the disgraced soldier sandwiched between Zola and Picquart; or the 'Peace Conference' card, with photos of half-a-dozen of the principal delegates. So-called 'art' post-cards are enjoying a fashionable vogue at present; abstract subjects are usually fantastically handled in line or monochrome by clever artists, and some of the designs may lay claim to lasting value. In others of these 'art' post-cards the artist's daring exceeds his discretion, sometimes as regards the subject dealt with, at other times in the inartistic execution, in which latter case the result is often a flaming, meretricious miniature poster, depicting vermilion cows against a background of purple trees, or the like.

In this, as in other industries, novelties will always command a ready sale, and are consequently brought out in large numbers. Among the minor novelties may be counted the partially transparent picture post-cards; these, when held up to the light, reveal some unexpected distortion of the real picture, as in some Christmas cards.

A post-card, measuring twelve inches by ten with a panoramic view of the town from which it is to be sent is certainly something new. This Broddingnagian post-card, which could easily be cut up into half-a-dozen English court-shape post-cards, is of course far above the size allowed by the post-office regulations, and is therefore mailed as *Drucksache*, or printed matter.

A fragile and costly novelty to send through the post is a thin strip of wood (!) of regulation post-card size, with some sylvan scene hand-painted in oils on the back.

The secret-code card is a very ingenious conception; it consists of a numbered card perforated at regular intervals. This is placed over an ordinary post-card, and the blank spaces written in; the code-card must now be turned, leaving other spaces to be filled in. A post-card written in this manner will be practically indecipherable except to the recipient, who has beforehand been supplied with the corresponding key-card.

Some pictorial post-cards have their views in relief, yet leaving the side reserved for the address

* The little barbarisms, 'cartomania,' 'cartophilic,' 'cartography,' are hardly distinctive enough; but they have been used for the sake of brevity. 'Cartography' till of late meant only the much more important 'science' of map-making.

perfectly flat. Others have facings of silk—that is to say, views woven in silk; these clever works of art emanate from Crefeld, the home and centre of the German silk-weaving manufactories, and are comparatively cheap.

The very latest, and a very interesting novelty, are the metachrome cards. The pictures, coloured or otherwise printed, are coated with a thin layer of white oil paint, making the view underneath look misty, but at the same time rendering it possible to use the whole surface for writing. On receiving the card thus written on, the message should be duly noted, and the post-card laid in water; in a moment—hey, presto!—the writing and mist have entirely disappeared, leaving a charming view, or what not, ready for insertion in the album.

As in stamp collecting, certain post-cards possess greater value for the collector than others. The more remote the locality from which the illustrated card is mailed the rarer it becomes. Of course, money will bring together a fine collection, for by means of existing post-card societies it is possible to have rare post-cards mailed to any address from all sorts of out-of-the-way places, in return for so much money. These societies have correspondents practically all over the world, and have a fixed scale of charges. They advertise cards in series, and agree to post, for instance, an American series (say five cards from five important cities in the United States) to your address within a certain time for the sum of two shillings. A series depicting the royal residences at London, Berlin, Paris, Moscow, and Constantinople costs the same amount, each one being posted from its respective capital. In this manner a large and varied collection of souvenir post-cards might be formed, but many prefer to keep such only as have been forwarded to them by friends.

Private post-card agents also undertake to keep the moneyed collector well supplied by making special journeys to a neighbouring country, where they agree to mail to subscribers a pictorial card from every town of importance they visit.

Reverting for a moment to rare post-cards, news is just to hand of a set of illustrated cards that has gone up a hundred per cent. in value under peculiar circumstances. These particular cards contained a copy of a photograph taken in Posen; and, Posen being a fortified town of the first rank, the authorities objected to a certain strategic secret being given to the world on the back of an illustrated post-card. Thirty-two stationers and retail merchants were therefore summoned for selling such wares, were fined, and ordered to deliver up their stock of this particular set of cards and the blocks from which they were printed. Some one or two hundred copies of the condemned print are nevertheless reported to be in circulation.

At the time of writing, two important illustrated post-card exhibitions are being held: the

one at Ostend (this is the first that has ever been held in Belgium), the other at Berlin. Some twenty to thirty thousand specimens of the new industry are on view at the German capital. Visitors to Paris next year will also have an opportunity of marking the progress made in France in the publishing of embellished post-cards, as there will be a national exhibition at Versailles. It is a sign of the times that a cartophilic congress has lately been held at Prague.

How, then, is this post-card industry progressing in our own country? Very indifferently, it must be admitted. There are several reasons to account for this state of affairs, the chief among which is no doubt the innate conservatism of our merchants and manufacturers. English illustrated post-cards compare very favourably with those of foreign make as regards the price; but as regards artistic effect, fine finish, and general excellence of get up, our cards are absolutely 'not in it,' as the schoolboy would say. 'No,' say the English postal authorities; 'we have got a certain shape for post-cards, and we're not going to alter that for anybody.' 'No,' likewise says the English printer; 'we use a certain process which gives a wood-block, smudgy appearance to photogravures, and we're not going to alter that for anybody, either. None of your new-fangled, made-in-Germany notions here. I print the card as I want to; you can take it or leave it, as you like!' Result: the public leaves it. The inadaptability of the home merchant to new conditions is apparent in his mode of selling the finished cards. Generally speaking, you cannot get a card singly; they are all put up in packets. This is obviously bad policy, for who wants to send off a dozen post-cards to herald a few hours' stay in a strange town? A welcome exception to this absurd custom are the penny-in-the-slot illustrated post-card machines to be seen at some of the more important railway termini. The only thing that prevents these from becoming more widely patronised is the fact that the cards which they supply are not sufficiently attractive.

Our fine art publishers would seem to be quite blind to the possibilities of the pictorial post-card, and are seemingly ignorant of the commercial profit to be reaped from the speedy sale of novel and original art productions. Illustrated Christmas cards are no longer fashionable; birthday cards and valentines are things of the past. Now, if ever, then, is surely the time for novel pictorial post-cards to be placed on the market, the time to commission original designs by capable British artists, to expend sufficient care over their printing and finish, and, finally, to widely distribute them. This latter essential—the distribution—is very badly managed in England; stationers seem to be the only retail tradesmen who sell cards. In Germany they can be obtained at every café, restaurant, or hotel; tobacconists, barbers, toy-vendors, and, naturally, book-shops and stationers retail them; hawkers sell them in the

street, at the railway stations, on steamboats and trains, anywhere and everywhere. While not advocating quite such an ubiquitous distribution as obtains in Germany and other parts of the Continent (where, it must be remembered, they are passing through the crisis of cartomania), we think that it should be possible to obtain single illustrated cards at tobacconists, at railway newspaper stalls, and at hotels.

The illustrated post-card is bound to become immensely popular in England, if only our apathetic designers, printers, and retail shop-keepers awake to the fact that profits will follow adequate commercial exploitation.

Pictorial post-card collecting forms an interesting and fascinating hobby, and the filled album will make an agreeable diversion, at once artistic, reminiscent, and instructive. It is perhaps not generally known that Her Majesty the Queen has taken great interest in the development of the picture post-card, and has requested a royal relative to form a collection on her behalf. This should give considerable stimulus to the awakening interest felt in England in the illustrated post-card, and bring the boom within measurable distance. Let us hope that the latter will produce many miniature artistic masterpieces, and not merely result in an unintelligent, evanescent craze.

IRISH INDUSTRIES.

THE MARBLES OF IRELAND.

By MARY GORGES.



NE of the many difficulties with which Irish industries have had to contend has been the want of interest shown by the Irish themselves during past years, when the tide of fashion was adverse to Ireland and her products; when in fact, if not in word, the feeling existed—among a certain section at least—that no good thing could come out of the country. In *The Absentee* Miss Edgeworth has faithfully depicted this, in the character of Lady Clonbrony, with her affectation of what she supposes to be the true English accent, her 'ree'lly' and 'cawnt,' her horror of being supposed to be Irish. It would be interesting to trace the causes which produced an idea so prevalent; but here I only mention it as a powerful factor in the failure of former attempts to turn the natural advantages of the country to account. The reaction has come; strangers are recognising the resources which Ireland possesses, and are directing the world's attention to them; and therefore some which have never quite died out are receiving a fresh impetus, while others yet in their infancy begin to look forward to a great future.

The Irish marbles and granites are instances in point. It is strange how little is generally known about an Irish industry which cannot be regarded as new—the quarrying and manufacture of marble. Many hundred years ago, as remarked recently, 'the ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland bore splendid testimony to the skill of native workmen in forming beautiful designs from the various marbles found in the country.'

The marbles of Kilkenny are the first mentioned in ancient records. Mr G. H. Kinahan, late of the Geological Survey, writes: 'The black marbles of Kilkenny are historic. Although we have in very ancient structures—such as

those of Askeaton, County Limerick, and Clonmacnoise, King's County, samples of very ancient marble, yet the first written record of Irish marble seems to be that of Gerrard Boate, written in 1652, in which he mentions: "Beside the freestone which is in every part of the land, there is marble found in many places, but more about Kilkenny, where not only many houses are built of the same, but whole streets are paved with it. . . . This marble, while it is rude as it cometh out of the ground, looketh grayish, but being polished it getteth a fine brownish colour, drawing somewhat towards the black."

The marble-works at Kilkenny were the first direct endeavour to utilise this product of the soil in modern times. They were founded in 1730, or perhaps a little earlier, by Mr William Colles, the son of a physician and surgeon who settled in Kilkenny in the latter end of the seventeenth century. The business has remained ever since in his family—that is, for five generations. William Colles is remarkable for having been the first person, in modern times at least, who applied power to the manufacture of marble, the various processes before his time having all been performed by hand. The following is an extract taken from an account of him and his mill in Tighe's *Survey of the County Kilkenny*, published in 1802:

'The mill is admirable for the simplicity of its structure and for the power it exerts. A wheel gives motion by a crank at one end of its axis to a frame containing twelve saws, which do the work of about twenty men. By a crank at the other end it moves a frame of five polishers; at this end Mr Colles has lately fitted a frame beneath the polishers with eight saws. The mill may fairly be said to do the duty of forty-two men daily. Water is never wanting; and from the goodness of its structure it is

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scarce ever stopped on account of repairs. . . . The machinery of the mill was the invention of Alderman Colles, grandfather of the present proprietor. He was, to use the words of an ingenious communication, a man of great mechanical abilities, and abounding in a variety of those eccentric schemes which mark original genius; one of which was an attempt to make dogs weave linen by turning wheels; another, the supplying the Corporation of Dublin with bored marble tubes as pipes for distributing water through the city, was defeated only by a combination of pump-borers and other mechanics, who rose in a mob and destroyed them on their arrival. While he amused the populace by various devices, such as that of a musical instrument which played by itself and floated on the stream of the river, and many others, he applied himself to the construction of machinery for different purposes, and invented a water-mill and an engine for dressing flax, simple and efficacious. He applied his marble to the construction of a vast variety of articles.'

In a *Tour in Ireland*, published in London in 1748, by Two Englishmen, it is said: 'Near the mill are apartments called warehouses, where you may see such a diversity of chimney-pieces, cisterns, buffets, vases, punch-bowls, frames for looking-glasses and pictures, &c., that they would employ the eye the longest day, and yet find something to admire. The marble is full as durable and bears as high a polish as any brought from Italy. I am informed that this ingenious gentleman sends yearly several shiploads to England, which gives me a particular satisfaction, that they may find a native of Ireland has outdone all they have hitherto seen.'

The marble referred to here is the black fossil marble of Kilkenny; but there are many others, beautiful specimens of some of which lie before me.

The Kilkenny marble-mills are situated on the banks of the beautiful river Nore, and are about two miles south of the town of Kilkenny. The machinery is driven by five large water-mills, and every stage of the process may here be seen, from the hewing and raising the marble blocks at the quarries to the cutting, sawing, chiselling, moulding, turning, rubbing, gritting, and polishing.

The Kilkenny black marble is of two kinds: one a jet black, of shining depth, which recalls the derivation of marble from the Greek *marmairein*—to shine or glitter; the other is richly marked with fossil formations. Kilkenny also produces marble of dark steel-gray, flecked with a lighter shade, and each of these blends beautifully with the green marble from Connemara, and the red, pink, and dove-coloured from County Cork. Two of these marbles bear the poetic names of 'Gray Sunset' and 'Pink Sunset,' the light-gray ground of the first being shaded

with pink, through which run veins of deeper colour; while the other has a redder tinge and darker veinings—just such difference as is between the sunsets of early spring, with their pink flush and delicate tintings, and the vivid reds and stormy grays of a later season. Two extremely handsome red marbles are called respectively 'Acres' and 'Victoria' or 'Cork Red'—it seems to have both names—in order to distinguish them, as they come from the same district, and resemble each other, though the 'Victoria Red' is darker, being, indeed, of rich claret or maroon colour. This comes from Little Island in Queenstown Harbour, and other parts of County Cork. The limestone of these quarries is, moreover, very valuable, for it bears the brunt of centuries of wear, and still retains its colouring, which is beautiful, taking the most delicate traceries, and under skilful hands a high polish, showing fossil formations. The Cathedral of St Finn Barre, Cork, is of this material, and the pillars in the nave are of the 'Cork Red' marble, as are the pillars of the large Catholic church at Queenstown. The Cathedral is a magnificent building, standing on the site of the ancient monastery of St Finn Barre, first Bishop of Cork.

It was Mr Martin of Ballinahinch—the famous Dick Martin, who owned nearly all the countryside between Galway and Clifden, whose avenue was forty miles long, and whose exertions caused the passing of the 'Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' in days when the subject was scarce thought of—he it was who first polished the green marble of Lissoughter, Connemara. A mantelpiece of this marble which was presented by him to George IV. is now in the Carlton Club, London. An American company is working the quarry at Lissoughter now, and sending large blocks to America; while the quarry belonging to the Irish Marble Company is at Streamstown, near Clifden.

About thirty years ago the town of Galway was the seat of fairly prosperous marble-works; and as tourists were then beginning to find their way to beautiful Connemara, some trade was done in ornaments which they could carry away as souvenirs of the country, such as brooches in designs of shamrock clusters, or harps, crosses, links, pendants, and charms of various kinds—all pretty and effective, and showing wonderfully in small compass the many tints of the green, from aquamarine to deep myrtle, sometimes in veins sharply contrasting with the colour of the ground, sometimes in delicate shadings, like those produced by the effect of light on green waves. So it came to pass that Connemara marble was a little better known to the outside world than were others; indeed, by many it was thought the only Irish marble of any consideration, and quite unique in colour. But green marbles are found in Italy and other countries, though, as a rule, their colour is darker than that of the Irish green. In a

highly-polished specimen from the Kilkenny marble-mills this is moss-green, the vivid green of moss that grows in the shade, at once soft and bright, and thrown out by a gray-blue ground, seen between the green which, as it were, clusters over it. Contrasting it with a duller, more opaque specimen of the same, coming from another source, I can understand how wonderful must be the process of polishing in the Kilkenny marble-mills of which I have heard. The Galway works failed, and lay idle until about fourteen years ago, when a Galway resident, Mr J. Miller, determined to try if the trade could not be revived. He reopened the works, and with no small success began to draw marble from the quarries of Connemara, and turn it to various uses. He also worked the black marble quarry, about three miles from the town of Galway, the product of which is highly esteemed. At his works are some very beautiful mantelpieces of this black marble, with artistic insets of Galway granite, executed most effectively by Galway men, who are found admirable subjects for training to this craft.

To properly appreciate the Galway green marble it should be seen in pillars, slabs, staircases, the architraves to doors, and dados, in all of which it is now employed, as well as in the mantelpieces, which from the first have been prized. It forms a beautiful contrast to the red and other Irish marbles, as was strikingly shown lately in a pulpit executed by Messrs Sharpe & Emery, of Dublin, the gift of an Irish gentleman to a newly-erected church in Jerusalem, the sides of which are panels of these various marbles. So the Isle of Saints sends forth of her treasures to the Mother of Christendom!

Messrs P. J. Neill & Co., Dublin, showed me several designs of Celtic crosses and ornaments, for which the firm was awarded the gold medal at Chicago. One in particular, an adaptation of the Royal Cross of Cong, in which Sicilian marble was used with Victoria red and Connemara green, promised a beautiful effect when finished. Messrs Neill & Co. do a large business in ecclesiastical work, and speak hopefully of the prospects of our Irish marble industry, as they find that the home product gives as much satisfaction as the imported article, and the demand for it has greatly increased within recent years. This is pleasant to hear from the senior establishment of sculptors in Dublin, and the more satisfactory, because, as a rule, only very beautiful materials are used in church work, and the test by comparison is therefore great.

There is a movement on foot with the purpose of arranging for an exhibit of Irish marbles at the forthcoming Paris Exhibition. Even if this led to no appreciable extension of trade abroad, in view of the cost of freightage, the heavy import duties charged, and the fact that marbles are plentiful in most foreign countries, yet indirectly this exhibit would probably be of great advantage by spreading the knowledge of our

Irish marbles among those who, as Lady Cadogan recently pointed out, scarcely know of their existence; but principally by calling attention to them on the part of the Irish themselves, who are often too ready to conclude that what comes from a distance must necessarily be superior to that which can be got at home. Yet the foreign marbles, equally with our own, do not bear long exposure to weather without losing their lustre, and both are therefore better fitted for internal than for external decorations, and inferior in this respect to our native granite, which is rapidly growing in importance.

For the reasons already given, there is little trade with the continent of Europe, but the Irish Marble Company do a very fair business with the United States in marble and monumental work, the latter in unpolished gray marble, which is of a uniform pleasing shade and very durable, bearing well the severe test of American winters, to which white marble soon succumbs. The trade with the United States might be much larger but for the very high duties which are levied there on imported marbles, both in a rough and polished state. On polished marble the duty is fifty per cent. *ad valorem*.

A monument of Kilkenny stone in memory of the late Cyrus W. Field, projector of the Atlantic telegraph, has recently been worked at the Kilkenny marble-mills, and sent to the United States for erection there. It consists of a massive double headstone and moulded base, the headstone sloped on top and moulded on edges, with carved palm-branches crossing each other, and surmounted by a Latin cross, all in high relief on the front, with the inscription in raised polished letters underneath.

The Irish Marble Company have also supplied the slab from their quarries at Kilkenny for a very interesting memorial tombstone erected in Peterborough Cathedral to Queen Catharine of Aragon, the cost having been defrayed by the 'Catharines' of England, Scotland, Ireland, and America; Mrs Clayton, the wife of Canon Clayton, being one of the originators of the movement. It is a beautiful specimen of Irish gray fossil marble, and consists of a solid slab weighing nearly a ton. The face is highly polished. In the centre is the true coat-of-arms of Catharine of Aragon, containing representations of castles, lions, and eagles, and rich ornamental lines delicately carved. The only other enrichment is an incised wheel-cross surmounted by fleurs-de-lis. The lettering forms the border between incised lines, the groundwork being 'sparrow-pecked.' The work has been carried out from the design of Mr Pearson, R.A., the Cathedral architect.

H.R.H. the Duchess of York, while in Ireland during the spring of 1899, paid a visit to the ancient cathedral of St Canice, Kilkenny, and on seeing the new marble pavement in the chancel, which consists exclusively of choice Irish marbles

from the quarries of the Irish Marble Company, Kilkenny, she made the remark that it was certainly the most beautiful pavement she had ever seen—a remark, need it be said, eagerly listened to and remembered.

The Irish marble industry has been able to hold its ground through all its difficulties, and what is really wanted to enable it to do much more is a very simple matter—namely, that persons

of wealth and position who contemplate or have entered on building operations should *require* their architects to specify native coloured marbles (both British and Irish) instead of the foreign varieties which architects are so fond of. This suggestion, if adopted, will do more to help our native marbles than anything else; and it is to be hoped that some influential person may soon set the good example.

SOME STAGE CONTRETEMPS.



NE of those unrehearsed incidents which call for extra smartness on the part of the performer if he wishes to avoid appearing ridiculous occurred at a performance of *The Shop Girl* during October 1895.

The French Count, at a sally of wit from Appleby anent his feet, retorts sarcastically, 'I reserve my foot for you, sare,' at the same time raising it as if in the act of kicking. On this occasion his boot unfortunately flew off into the wings, displaying a large hole in his sock. The ready-witted comedian who played the part was, however, equal to the occasion. 'Farewell, sare!' he exclaimed tragically, limping round the stage. 'Farewell! We shall meet again! I go—to mend my socks!' The house literally roared with laughter.

Miss Sarah Thorne tells a good story of how, when she was playing in *The Colleen Bawn* at a provincial theatre, the gun loaded with powder to shoot Danny Mann was missing from the wing just before it was required, and could not be found. At the last moment one of the actors, eating from a paper bag, emptied out the biscuits, inflated the bag, and bursting it with a sudden blow, Danny rolled over into the water, killed by the report of a paper bag as effectually as he would have been by a real gun.

Miss Marie Wainwright narrates an absurd instance that nearly threw her off her balance during a first night: 'Perhaps you remember that as Dame Hannah, in *Ruddigore*, I had to go on with a small dagger, with which to threaten the wicked Baronet's wife. When my turn came round the dagger was nowhere to be found. Nothing would induce me to go on without my property, and although Mr Barrington implored me to appear without it, I was resolute. There was a terrible stage wait, and at last Mr Barrington grew desperate, and forcing something into my hand, absolutely pushed me on to the stage. And what do you think it was? A large gas key. I continued to conceal the absurd makeshift from the audience; but when I had to hand my supposed dagger to Mr Grossmith, he most unkindly gave me away. 'How can I kill myself with this thing?' he said, holding up the gas key in its

entirety, which produced a perfect howl of laughter, and for some minutes we were unable to continue.'

One of those extraordinary lapses of memory which sometimes affects actors once occurred to Mrs Patrick Campbell when acting at the St James's Theatre. 'My most painful experience since being on the stage,' says that lady, 'occurred one evening when, two minutes after my entrance in the first act of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, an absolute blank of memory came over me. I had played Mrs Tanqueray more than a hundred times; but every word had left me for the moment, and I had to read the part from the prompt book; yet I heard from friends and professionals in front that I never played better.'

When Charles Kean was playing 'Richard III.,' his fearful grimaces in character paralysed all the other actors with fright, much to his amusement. On one occasion a new man had to take the part of the sentinel who awoke Richard. When asked 'Who is there?' he had to say, 'Tis I, my lord; the village cock hath twice proclaimed the hour of morn.' But as Kean was making such fearful grimaces and scowling at him, the poor fellow lost his head, and could only stammer, 'Tis I, my lord; 'tis I, my lord; the—village cock! 'Tis I, my lord; the—village cock!' By this time there was a decided titter all over the theatre, and Kean then said, 'Then why the mischief don't you crow?' which, needless to say, brought down the house.

Jefferson while playing 'Rip Van Winkle' went to the theatre one evening tired out after a long day's fishing. When the curtain rose on the third act it disclosed the white-haired Rip still deep in his twenty years' nap. Five, ten, twenty minutes passed, and he did not wake. The fact was that all the time he was really sleeping. Finally, the patience of the gods became exhausted, and one called out, 'Is there going to be nineteen years more of this snooze business?' At this point Jefferson began to snore, which decided the prompter, who, opening a small trap, began to prod him from below. The much-travelled comedian began to fumble in his pocket for an imaginary railway-ticket, and muttered, 'Going right through, collector,' which transfixed the audience with amazement. An instant later Jefferson sat up, with a loud shriek, evidently in

agony. The exasperated prompter had 'jabbed' him with a pin.

The audience is sometimes responsible for interruptions which give performers an opportunity of displaying their ready wit. Barry Sullivan, the Irish tragedian, was playing in *Richard III.* some years ago at Shrewsbury. When the actor came to the lines, 'A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!' some one in the pit called out, 'Wouldn't a donkey suit you, Mr Sullivan?' 'Yes,' responded the tragedian, turning quickly on the interrupter; 'please come round to the stage door.'

Many years back, when Toole was playing at the Hull theatre, a man in the stage-box suddenly inquired if he might ask him a question. Toole seemed surprised, and answered, 'After the play.' But the man persisted, whereat the audience roared, 'Turn him out.' Toole calmed them, saying, 'We are Englishmen; let every man have his say;' adding to the man, 'Go on, sir.' 'I want,' said he, 'to ask your advice. Having a little more money than I knew what to do with'—here Toole pricked up his ears—'I invested it with the Khedive of Egypt, and now I can't get my interest. What would you do?' 'I think,' said the actor, 'I should *sue his canal*.' There was never a laugh. A London audience would have fully appreciated such a sally; but it fell quite flat on the ears of the north-country folk, who went home growling in a mystified way that Mr Toole had been fooling them somehow.

Signor Foli some years since took part in a concert at St Helens, where he sang 'The Raft.' He had just finished the first verse when an infant in arms made the hall resound with its cries. Foli commenced the second verse, the first line of which runs, 'Hark! what sound is that which greets the mother's ear?' He could get no farther than the end of the line by reason of a fit of uncontrollable laughter. The audience at first failed to see the cause of his mirth, but presently it dawned upon them, and they all laughed heartily with him. He left the stage, but soon returned smiling, and rendered in his inimitable style, 'Out on the Deep.'

This calls to mind an absurd blunder related in Tom Moore's *Diary* concerning John Kemble. He was performing one of his favourite parts at some country theatre, and was interrupted from time to time by the squalling of a child in the gallery, until at length, angered by this rival performance, Kemble walked with solemn steps to the front of the stage, and exclaimed in his most tragic tones, 'Ladies and gentlemen, unless the play is stopped the child cannot possibly go on!'

It was not often that Charles Mathews was nonplussed; but one night at the Olympic a swell in a front stall got up in the middle of one of the scenes to put on his coat for the purpose of leaving; whereupon Charles, with a cool manner

which in any one else would have been impertinent, said, 'You had better wait a little, sir; there's more to come.' 'That's just the reason I am going,' said the swell; and Charles said afterwards that he had never felt so sat upon in his life.

Like all else, this subject has its tragic side. Once at the Surrey Theatre the harlequin slipped as he leaped through a clock-face, and his leg stuck in the scene. Harry Payne, who was playing clown, thinking to cover a bad retreat with a laugh, took hold of the leg, and shaking it violently, roared out, 'Oh, there's a clumsy man!' The harlequin was pulled through, and the scene proceeded; but as he did not put in an appearance again, Harry asked the prompter what was the matter. 'Poor fellow! he has broken his leg,' was the reply. It was the leg that Harry Payne had shaken. When he heard what he had done it was too much for his big, tender heart, and he fainted dead away.

THE MORN'S MEANING.

HERE in the height I sit awhile;
Down in the vale the river leaps and sings,
And all ephemeral exultant things
Sun themselves in God's smile.

My heart, attuned and answering,
Feels the grave passion of an autumn day
Beat, like the music of a pulse at play,
In blade and leaf and wing.

My spirit mystically hears
The intense, innumerable, murmurous sound,
The audible silence of Earth's endless round
That comes not in the ears;

And the strong sense of life divine
Diffused through golden Nature's happy mood
Makes a communion of the solitude,
And all the world a shrine.

It is a chapter hard to con.
Sages are fain to read it, seers have sought
To scan its page, and all has come to nought:
And the great scene goes on.

For who his daring skill would prove
On such a theme, must spare both lore and wit,
Leave the blind sophist to his chains, and sit
In the sweet school of Love.

There I—born blind—have sat, and see;
And solve the enigma well, and understand
This thing, that in the touch of one small hand
Lies all the world for me.

And I, Love's scholar, reading true,
This bright morn's lesson do declare, and say
To you, my dear, my loved one, far away,
That I, you love, love you.

T. H. PASSMORE.